NISHKALANKESHWAR BHAVNAGAR PILGRIMAGE

PART 1 to 3.

Dear friends, returned from a tiring trip to Nishkalank Panch Pandas Mahadev followed up to Palitana a headquarters of Shwetambar Jains.

Part 1.



Calm by lane at Bhavnagar Town

Started from Hotel Mausam early morning. Was riding an auto making all sorts of noises! Yet was strong enough to reach the destination. On the way, we had a strong cup of tea hosted by the owner of Auto.

Bhavnagar is a small town. Having rural rustic charm. Had a snap of by lane for record purposes.

The journey of about 27 km was of twists and turns. At one place saw Pyramid like heaps. Curiously when reached near they were salt heaps being mended by modern heavy dozers. Was quick to have a snap.

Pyramid like heap of Salt!



Huge JCB at the work





Display board

Soon we reached Kodiyak town seashore. I quickly changed to a water-friendly dress! From distance found that I have reached at right time. The road was cleared for walking.



The sand was soft and the water was cool. I started barefoot. Not used to trade distance, I soon found going tough. The route was slippery. Balancing

was difficult for fellow walkers. Found amusing that children below 3-4 years enjoy the watery track. Some parents were holding infants in laps and going merrily as if walking on a normal Road!

My feet were saddled with mud and paining when found hard pebbles of rocks hidden underwater. Making no complaints, and chanting 'Om Namah Shivay'(ॐ नमःशिवाय) destination was nearing. The distance may be below 1km. People reached earlier were returning in batches. Mostly Gujrati localities.



It is a sort of cemented platform. A tower with red and white rings around was inviting to witness untiring dance of tides day and night!...

Part 1 end...

Bhavnagar trip - Koliyak – Part 2.

As I landed on cemented place, got some snaps quickly when people were not around the pindis. Later removing the T-shirt, sat near lingams by turn.



Took beads for chanting. Felt I have come empty-handed. Just managed to get some Bilva Patras on the way. Abhishek by water, milk and other formalities I can't perform, not that I didn't know but it was sheer neglect and lack of efforts to gather puja preparations. Now it was too late!



Naadi Grantha reading was a driving force to make me come here all the way. Those Tamil verses were coming to my mind. In this mental state, I closed my eyes and was chanting panchakshar Mantra. Suddenly familiar Tamil accent fell on my ears. It was praise for Lord Shiva...! It went for a long I opened my eyes out of curiosity. What I saw was a Miracle. Some lady was pouring milk on Pindi! And in the background, an elderly head shaven woman as a dedication for her deity was singing Tamil shlokas! Then suddenly a thought came to mind, you don't have to do it by yourself. Presume these preparations are for you. Their renderings are care of you. Be a witness...

I sat near every Pindi, presuming in mind this one is dedicated by Dharma Raj, and so on. At every puja there was Miracle happened.



On one Pindi a person was offering Bilva Patras, those Patras of identical size, appeared as if freshly plucked. Generally, Patras are put in plastic pouches haphazardly here they were stacked up so nicely in such a way that I have never seen before!

At next, which I presumed as Arjuna Pindi, Gujrati lady was pouring water and saying, 'I have come from long, please protect my family, provide us good health, longevity, good finances'. It was a lyrical rendering. As the chanting stopped, came a feeling, be a silent witness to the happenings as if I am the one who is saying so!



On occasions, I requested on goers to take a snap or two. At Bhim Pindi, my chanting came to halt as the same Tamil woman was murmuring Tamil stotram holding her ears with crossed hands! As if this is the perfect place to cleanse stigmas of blots of bad deeds, with the incessant waves of seawater, I felt I had come to wash dirt and become spotless, Nishkalank!

This mental state remained for some time. Looking around I found calm sea waves deep inside. I had carried the holy ashes of my deceased mother for immersion. Felt I must further walk to the bank of sea and immerse it. Though the soles were paining, I darted in the backside direction. It was almost another 1 km further from this platform. At times, I was in great physical pain, but something made me march forward.





Towards seashore

I remembered suddenly, that in the same reading that I will have to be extra careful so that I don't fall down and get injured in my right leg. But surely the happening could not be avoided! Previously people used to laugh if they see someone falling flat on the ground! Now they appreciate seeing cricketers diving to reach the boundary line or crease. The second was the case when many surrounded me to help out to get up! What a fall! They might have said in mind! Looking at my body losing balance at a very inconsequential jump to avoid splashing of water thrown around by Panwala Thela! I landed in a pool of water; clothes fully stained. Bruised at joint corners! It was a wonderful scene for onlookers!

This instance reminded me of a fresh. "You fellow, be cautious otherwise none is here to lift you for medical help." So, I was trying to be doubly sure

that I don't land on sharp-edged pebbles or crabs mooching around in mire! Slowly I reached the bank. Took out the pack of ashes. The mortal remains submerged in the sea. Folding hands, asked my beloved mother to pardon me if I have said, done against her wishes intentionally or otherwise. Seeing the muddy water, decided not to have a dip in the water waves. I returned back to the lighthouse like a tower.









There was an announcement being made over the loudspeaker in Gujrati. Someone was saying so and so from some town or city has given so and so rupees for converting it to buy, stones, cement or iron for the construction of proper arrangement starting after the month Shravan. I felt I should contribute. I offered Rs 101 for the mother side and separately for me. I wrote some sentences so that he should say as I wished. When I told him that many visitors come here as per instructions from Naadi readings, he nodded his head in agreement. So, he promptly made announcements to please me. This I got recorded. I could hear the same announcement repeated even when I reached the shore and started to gather my footwear! Looking back, I said I don't know if at all I could revisit here. But the moments I experienced will

remain forever entrenched in the memories. Before leaving the place, I drank Nimbu Soda water like a thirsty animal gets the streams of oasis in the desert...!!



Cont...

Part 3.

Bhavnagar trip - Palitana - Part 3.



On completion of Koliyak part of pilgrimage, I felt that I should visit some other places of repute and worship. I had heard about Khodiyar and Palitana. So, on advice, I got down at bus stand to join in Palitana bus. Someone indicated to sit in deluxe bus standing in lane to avoid traffic gaze. Bus was good. But without AC. It was around 12am. Soon journey started. The blaze of sun rays was burning exposed skin. Some Bhavnagari namkin bought on the way, got finished soon. Packed bus was speeding and Hindi duet songs were in full swing. Nice tunes, stereophonic speakers took to the memory of nineties.

Once upon time, I was lover of filmy songs. Used to keep records of singers, musicians, movie names, years of release etc. As a hobby made hundreds of crossword puzzles which subsequently got published in filmy magazines of Dariya Ganj area of Delhi! Such was my obsession that two books

exclusively on TV and films and other on general knowledge were released by 'Rapidex' fame Pustak Mahal publications! But this was all before Naadi bug bitten me!

There was a theme in selection of songs. Shyness to express the tender feelings to the other partner was prominent. Now off hand I remember songs like... (Can't recall in the surrounding of railway platform!)...

...

Soon the bus stopped. All passengers got down. I was yet in listening mood! Hurriedly I joined in three wheeler which was called by bus conductor as a favour. I didn't have much idea as to what was ahead of me. I expected beautiful temple structure before me. The auto kept on going, entering in decorated door gates giving prominence to famous personality " Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal" from Pune - Ghodegav. Billionaire emperor shot up to fame for Pan Gutka and lavish car collections. (There is an interesting story about his fascination of cars which was narrated by great Naadi lover late Babuji Bhagwat.) Every entrance was a stamp of his name. Before getting down I took snap of one of the door gate!









On the way, many small temples of Jain munis were catching eyes for their intricate masonry work and glitter of wealth!

As auto came to halt, the fare of Rs 50 was too little for the distance and grandeur on both sides! Soon I became VIP, surrounded by a noisy flock of people. Everyone was trying to establish, "I am the best"- competition. Like they rushed at me, went away with equal speed as birds not finding food of choice.

They lost interest in my announcement that I have no intention to climb 3500 steps by hiring" Doli" for Rs 2000! Their faces spoke, "why do these jokers come here to say they are not interested to visit the main attraction of the holy spots on Hilltop?". To me 'Doli' was the privilege of the bride, to join a new home leaving her 'Babul ka Ghar!

It was my turn to literally run for shelter. The temperature was so strong that my pent up mad thrust took me to the first lassi and namkin shop. Under fan glass of lemon water had a soothing effect. 'Get one more!' my repeated 'Farmaish' was like a drunkard asking for one more peg! I hadn't eaten on the way, that was also compensated by glasses of juice. At last, a little too heavy to walk, found Doliwalas unloading a woman passenger...







I managed to get a little chat and a couple of snaps. Two hours of upwards and return in one hour was tough to the carriers and more tiring for clients in unfamiliar seating postures!

Leaving them, I climbed 10 - 12 steps to reach a plinth from where I could get a better view of the stiff hill ahead. Knowing that it was beyond me, I was looking aimlessly to the surroundings. Someone in uniform politely pointed to

my shorts, asked me to adhere to the dress code of the venue. Realising that I was in Bermuda like short 'Chaddi' since seashore visit, I quickly begged pardon for the transgression of the rules. Not that I was to sing a kindergarten rhyme 'go up the hill to fetch a pale of water '. I took that as a plausible excuse not to be a strong contender to climb the towering hill.

Knowing that I can't stay more time there, I returned to the auto stand to get suitable auto. The temptation was too compelling to have sips of Lemon sharbat now in leisure time. Two full glasses and 'farsan bhel' took place in the stomach. As I got inside the auto rickshaw I realised that I have misplaced my plastic bag carrying no money but some clothes and a towel. My queries went futile. Happy to carry less load returned empty-handed. The same bus was waiting for musical hospitality. Again enjoyed some different Sufi songs. I dropped the idea of visiting Khodiyar shrine for the paucity of time and tiredness. When reached in the hotel AC room found the soles were badly bruised and swollen... Thus was the trip to Palitana!...

... This part, I am narrating while seated in AC waiting Hall on Ahmedabad Rly Stn. Will revisit Kaushikan Guruji center to collect the job of proofreading. And conclude journey to Pune by Duranto exp.

...

5th June 2016